November 15, 1999
FACT SHEET

FINAL AIR TOXICS RULE FOR ACETAL RESIN, ACRYLIC AND MODACRYLIC FIBER, AND POLYCARBONATE PRODUCTION (GENERIC MACT RULE: Process Wastewater Provisions)

TODAY'S ACTION

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is today issuing final rules to reduce emissions of air toxics from wastewater streams at three different manufacturing processes: acetal resin; acrylic and modacrylic fiber; and polycarbonate production.

- Air toxics, also known as hazardous air pollutants, are those pollutants known to, or suspected of, causing cancer and/or other serious health problems in human.s

- For each of the three manufacturing processes, the rule establishes control requirements for the following phases of the manufacturing process: certain in-process liquid streams in open systems; maintenance wastewater; and affected process wastewater.

- The rule requires certain in-process liquid streams in open systems to minimize emissions by covering or enclosing the liquid stream. Maintenance wastewater provisions require the development of procedures to minimize emissions. And the rule requires manufacturers to convey affected process wastewater and treat it prior to release.

- Today's rule is expected to maintain current levels of emission reductions and is not expected to reduce those further. The estimated combined cost for the nine affected facilities within the three industries is negligible.

WHAT THE RULE WILL DO

Acetal Resin Production

- Acetal resins are thermoplastics used in industrial applications, plumbing and irrigation, automotive plastic parts, consumer articles, appliances and other plastic parts. The primary pollutants emitted from acetal resin production are formaldehyde and methanol.

- There are only two major facilities in the nation that manufacture acetal resins, both of which already have controls in place equal to the level of control required for this source category. Today's action is designed to ensure continued well-controlled operations; it is not expected to significantly reduce air toxic emissions.

Acrylic And Modacrylic Fiber Production

- Acrylic and modacrylic fibers are synthetic fibers composed of acrylonitrile and

lesser fractions of copolymers. These fibers are used in two main industries: as a substitute for wool fibers in the textile industry (carpet, socks, sweaters, etc.); and as a carbon fiber precursor for the sporting goods industry (tennis rackets, golf clubs, etc.) and the aviation industry.

- Today's rule applies only to three currently operating, major facilities, all of which already have controls in place that reflect the level of control required for this source category. Today's action is designed to ensure continued well-controlled operations; it is not expected to reduce air toxic emissions.

Polycarbonate Production

- Polycarbonates are produced mainly by reacting bisphenol with phosgene. Methylene chloride is the solvent typically used in the process. Polycarbonates have a variety of uses, including compact disks, automotive parts and electrical components.

- Four major facilities presently operating will be affected by the process wastewater requirements in today's rule. Most polycarbonate producers already have installed emission control or recovery equipment. Today's final rule will maintain the emissions reductions of a number of air toxics, including methylene chloride, ethyl chloride and phosgene.

BACKGROUND

- Under the Clean Air Act, EPA is required to regulate sources of 188 listed air toxics. For major sources (those with the potential to emit 10 tons annually or more of a listed pollutant or 25 tons or more of a combination of pollutants), the law requires EPA to develop standards require the application of stringent air pollution controls. These controls are known as maximum achievable control technology, or MACT, standards.

- EPA developed today's rule in close partnership with major stakeholders including industry representatives and representatives of those states with affected production facilities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Interested parties can download the final rule from EPA's World Wide Web site at http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/ramain.html.

- For more information about the final requirements, contact the following people:
  -- Acetal resins: Mr. John M. Schaefer,(919) 541-0296;
  -- Acrylic and modacrylic fibers: Mr. Anthony P. Wayne,(919) 541-5439;
  -- Polycarbonates: Mr. Mark Morris, (919) 541-5416.